

House Republican Press Release

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Governor Signs Cell Phone Bill



Measure Co-Sponsored by Scribner restricts cell phone use of motorists

HARTFORD- Representative David Scribner (R-Brookfield) today hailed the decision of Governor M. Jodi Rell to sign into law a measure that would prohibit the use of hand held cellular phones by motorists while they drive. The bill makes an exception in the case of an emergency such as communicating an emergency situation to an emergency response operator, hospital, physician's office or health clinic, ambulance company, or fire or police department.

Except in the event of an emergency, individuals operating under learners' permits or with licenses issued subject to requirements applicable to 16- and 17-year old drivers are prohibited from using cell phones with, or without, hands-free devices. School bus drivers may use their mobile phones to call school officials in the event of an emergency.

"It was very clear during our hearings in the Transportation Committee, and from the research we have seen, that the use of hand held cellular phones by motorists while they are driving is extremely distracting, and as a result, extremely dangerous," said **Representative Scribner**, who is Ranking Member of the legislature's Transportation Committee. "Using one hand on a phone while driving, and engaging in a conversation, or the act of dialing a cellular phone while driving is a careless activity that should be prohibited."

The measure has come before the General Assembly several times in past years, and was narrowly defeated as recently as last year.

"Under this new law, you would still be able to communicate on a cell phone that is hands-free while driving, by using an ear-adaptor, or a system such as On-Star which is hands free and has many voice-activated features," said **Representative Scribner**.

Connecticut will become the third state after New York and New Jersey to prohibit drivers from using hand-held phones. The Governor signed the bill in her Executive Chambers on Tuesday, July 12, 2005. The new law will go into effect on October 1, 2005.